

VZCZCXRO2023

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R 110712Z MAY 07

FM AMEMBASSY HANOI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5335

INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH 3010

RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000866

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS AND DRL/AWH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: ANOTHER DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST DETAINED IN ONGOING GVN CRACKDOWN

REFS: A) HANOI 752 B) HANOI 839 C) HCMC 514

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Summary

¶11. (SBU) On May 10, Poloff met with Do Ba Tan, husband of detained writer and activist Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, in order to discuss Thuy's case. Thuy was arrested on April 21 on charges of anti-state propaganda. Her husband vehemently denies such charges. While her husband has not been allowed to visit her at the detention facility, he is allowed to send medications every two weeks via prison officials. Since her arrest, state-controlled media has repeatedly linked Thuy to the case of jailed human rights lawyer Nguyen Van Dai (septel). Tan seeks the support of Western governments in securing his wife's release. End Summary.

¶12. (SBU) On May 10, Poloff met with Do Ba Tan, husband of jailed writer and human rights activist Tran Khai Thanh Thuy (Ref A). Last January, Human Rights Watch gave Thuy its Hellman-Hammett Award, citing her for "courage in the face of political persecution." On April 21, Ministry of Public Security (MPS) police arrested Thuy, searched her home and confiscated her computer and other written materials. According to Tan, the search warrant cited "Article 88" of Vietnam's criminal code, propaganda against the State, but he has received no official arrest report and has not been informed of a trial date. (Note: Since the GVN started its systematic crackdown on the pro-democracy Bloc 8406 and other fledgling democracy movements almost three months ago, most political dissidents have been charged under Article 88 of Vietnam's criminal code. End note.)

¶13. (SBU) The GVN is holding 47 year-old Thuy at the B-14 Detention Camp in Hanoi. According to her husband, she suffers from tuberculosis and diabetes. While Tan is not allowed to see his wife, every two weeks he is allowed to deliver medications to prison officials. Thuy has two children, a 16-year old daughter and a six-year old son. Tan, an elementary school teacher, told Poloff that their son is going through a tough time without his mother. Tan also cited his own depression. Prison officials recently denied transmittal of a letter to Thuy from her daughter.

¶14. (SBU) Thuy's house remains under MPS surveillance, according to Tan, with signs out front stating "no photos" and "no trespassing." Since Thuy's arrest, Tan gave a telephone interview to somebody "he did not realize" was a BBC News reporter. The interview resulted in a BBC News internet article. In addition, Thuy's daughter wrote a letter to friends in Germany which was, according to Tan, posted on the website of an "Australian NGO advocating Thuy's release." After these incidents, the MPS called Tan in, reprimanded him, and asked him to refrain from contact with journalists and "foreign

officials." Tan declined cooperation.

State-Controlled Media on the Attack

¶5. (SBU) As with other recently-arrested activists (Ref B), state-controlled media has taken a hard-line against Thuy. She has been connected to jailed human rights lawyer Nguyen Van Dai (on trial on May 11 - see septel); identified as a member of the pro-democracy Bloc 8406 and recipient of foreign funding; accused of advocating the outlawed United Workers Farmers Organization labor union (Ref C); and linked to a reportedly U.S.-based anti-Hanoi "Vietnam Reform Party." A recent media article stated that Thuy had "called on members of the public to hold general strikes and mass street demonstrations or to sacrifice themselves and plant bombs." According to a separate article, she had supported, from Vietnam, a March 2007 anti-Hanoi rally in front of the Vietnamese Embassy in Ottawa and had called into a radio show advising "a campaign of kidnapping and abduction of Vietnamese diplomats abroad."

¶6. (SBU) Tan denies that his wife has ever advocated violence or the overthrow of the regime in Hanoi. The articles from state-controlled press are "deeply distorted, exaggerated, and disturbing." He told us his wife "is a writer" who wrote about human rights and democracy issues and had contacts with overseas NGOs. He added that, while he did not always agree with his wife's writings, he respected her work.

Request for USG Support Regarding Thuy's Case

¶7. (SBU) Tan requested advocacy from the U.S. Embassy on his wife's case. He also wants to engage other "like-minded, human rights-oriented" foreign governments and international NGOs, specifically citing a Swiss human rights NGO and an Australian NGO that had advocated for his wife's release.

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